

Colours We Live by?: *Red* and *Green* Metaphors in English and Spanish¹

ANA LAURA RODRÍGUEZ REDONDO, SILVIA MOLINA PLAZA

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID, UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to deepen into the nature of motivation and into the literal and metaphorical continuum of colour expressions for red and green in English and Spanish. We focus on the analysis of colour metaphors in relation to concepts different from those of emotions, in non-literary texts, and where synaesthesia is not the only motivation. Our corpus consists of lexical items, idioms and collocations where colour contributes to meaning, taken from the BNC (English) and the CREA (Spanish). The study shows that a) the literal-metaphorical cline cannot always be observed within the same expression; b) the importance of the centre of the cline made up of chains of entailments is predominantly based on cultural knowledge, as well as on value judgements assigned to colours by the language community.

Keywords: metonymy, metaphor, domain, literal-metaphorical cline, cultural entailments.

RESUMEN: Este artículo profundiza en la naturaleza de la motivación y en el continuo literal-metafórico de expresiones que utilizan los colores rojo y verde en inglés y español. Nos concentramos en el análisis de metáforas con colores en relación con conceptos diferentes a los de las emociones, en contextos no literarios y donde la sinestesia no es la única motivación. Nuestro corpus consiste en elementos léxicos, frases hechas y colocaciones donde el color contribuye al significado, tomado del BNC (inglés) y del CREA (español). El estudio demuestra a) que el continuo literal-metafórico no siempre puede verse dentro de la misma expresión; b) la importancia del punto medio del continuo compuesto de cadenas de implicaturas predominantemente basadas en el conocimiento cultural y los valores asignados a los colores por los hablantes de cada comunidad.

Palabras clave: metonimia, metáfora, dominios, continuo literal-metafórico, implicaturas culturales.

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1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to deepen into the nature of motivation and into the literal/metaphorical continuum of expressions with colours red and green in English and Spanish. Our study focuses on the analysis of colour metaphors in relation to concepts different from those of emotions (Kövecses, 1990), in non-literary texts (Cazeaux, 2002; Cacciari *et al.*, 2004) and in situations where synaesthesia is not the only motivation (Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2003).

Three main topics are related to our study: metonymy and metaphor; domain differentiation; and the literal-metaphorical cline.

Metonymy and metaphor are conventional cognitive mechanisms for meaning extension and abstraction. Metonymy implies the projection of subdomains within a common experiential one (Barcelona, 2000 *a*: 4). It can also be conceived as the highlighting of part of a domain (Ruiz de Mendoza, 1996; 2000; 2006) or the active zone within an abstract domain (Langacker, 1993). On the other hand, metaphor is the conceptual mapping from one source domain onto a clearly different target one. In both cases, the concept of domain and the identification of one or two different domains is important to establish cases of metonymy or metaphor.

A domain may be defined as “a cognitive structure that captures relevant material from an ICM within a context of use” (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2006). An ICM (Idealized Cognitive Model) is a conceptual structure that tries to represent the knowledge that is activated at a certain moment, and the extension of that knowledge depends on the situation or the purpose of the cognitive operation we put that knowledge to be used on (Lakoff, 1987). It allows the backgrounding and foregrounding of information (Lakoff, 1987: 133) and thus, it is related to figure/ground theories in Psychology (Koffka, 1955) and Linguistics (Fillmore, 1982; Langacker, 1987). A domain is also understood in a more narrow sense as “a semantic structure that functions as the base for at least one concept profile” (Croft and Cruse, 2004: 15). In fact, according to Taylor (1997: 84) “In principle, any conceptualization or knowledge configuration, no matter how simple or complex, can serve as the cognitive domain for the characterization of meanings”. From these definitions, we understand a domain as a general conceptual knowledge pack with no defined boundaries except for those that provide memory activation capacities, purpose of activation, situation and the prompt of knowledge activation. Cognitive Linguists also agree in considering domains to be experiential (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987).

The problem is that the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy, as defined here, are basically distinguished by the existence of defined, and thus somewhat bounded domains. Still the question is how to differentiate domains. One possible parameter may be the situational context. In this case, it is possible to claim that a change of situational context implies necessarily a change of domain. For example, in Peninsular Spanish *este chico está como una moto*, [literally: *like a motorbike* = worked up] activates both the domain of emotions and that of motor vehicles, thus, we have two clearly different contexts and two different domains. However, if the context is not changed, it is difficult to see a change of domain; for example, in *Lolita was a good black comedy*, where the collocation *black comedy* no longer refers to a play where black

slaves played a part, and where a characteristic sense of humour is used; but it has a more general meaning that applies to a film or play dealing with things considered serious in an amusing way. Though the situational context - the show business - has not changed, we have to go beyond the original domain to understand the current meaning. The change of meaning leads to activating a domain. The question is: Does this new meaning imply a new domain or is it just a new subdomain in the same context?

Moreover, according to Radden (2000: 94), two manifestations may be imagined as separate parts of the same conceptual domain, mainly by linguists concerned with metaphorical systematicity (Radden, 2000: 95). However, laymen's interpretation may consider two concepts to belong to the same domain, as when people think of a flower and a flowerpot. In these cases, we would face instances of metonymy-based metaphors.

Nevertheless, the question whether two concepts belong to one single domain or two different ones needs further study. However, in this paper we take into account two main theories on the motivation and continuum of conventional expressions: the one that claims that these expressions are metaphor motivated (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999), and the one that supports the metonymic origin of everyday metaphors (Jakobson, 1956; Kövecses, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991; Barcelona, 1986, 2000 *a, b*; Goossens, 1990; Dirven, 1993; Pauwels, 1995; Niemeier, 2000; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), idioms and conventionalized lexical phrases are motivated by conceptual metaphorical mappings. Namely, commonplace knowledge and primary metaphors give rise to everyday metaphors. Commonplace knowledge includes cultural models, folk theories, knowledge or beliefs accepted in a given culture. Primary metaphors are part of the cognitive unconscious, and derive from the constant interaction with the world. They are non linguistic and are made explicit through language or any other symbolic system. They imply an inference preserving conceptual mapping from the sensorimotor domain (source) onto the subjective experience domain (target) (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999: 57-58).

Other researchers think that conventional language is metonymically motivated, although it depends on the interpreter's perspective on what constitutes one or two domains. According to Radden (2000: 105), "The metonymic driving forces behind metaphors [...] are: (i) a common experiential basis of the two metaphorical domains, (ii) the operation of implicature, (iii) category structure, and (iv) cultural models".

What is common to both perspectives on the motivation of conventional lexical expressions is the role of cultural models as cultural knowledge structures shared by the members of a society (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980, 1999; Lakoff, 1987). They are taken-for-granted models of the world (Holland and Quinn, 1987: 4) and may include folk models or naïve theories of the world and account for metaphors in the fields of physical forces, communication and emotions, and also probably in areas of perception, morality and life (Radden, 2000: 103).

For those who defend metonymy based metaphors there is also a continuum from literal to metaphorical interpretations shared both by collocations and idioms. Radden (2000: 105) claims that:

The classical notions of metonymy and metaphor are to be seen as prototypical categories at the end points of a continuum of mapping processes. The range in the middle of the

metonymy-metaphor continuum is made up of metonymy-based metaphors, which also account for the transition of metonymy to metaphor by providing an experiential motivation of a metaphor [...]

However, there are different ways to observe the cline between literal and metaphorical meanings. For example:

We may think of a continuum from metaphor to metonymy where many-correspondence metaphors would be at one end and clear cases of referential metonymy would be at the other, with one-correspondence metaphors and predicative uses of metonymy in the middle [...] (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2000: 115).

Geeraerts (2002) uses Jakobson's (1971) distinction between syntagmatic (metonymic) and paradigmatic (metaphorical) poles. He presents a classification of the different possibilities in the cline based on different types of syntagmatic and paradigmatic associations between conceptual domains. The different levels of the continuum depend on semantic specialization based on two parameters: isomorphism and motivation. Isomorphism is syntagmatic transparency, that is, there is a correspondence or systematic correlation between the parts of the formal structure and the structure of the semantic interpretation as a whole. Motivation is paradigmatic transparency, namely, the idiomatic meaning cannot be derived from the literal reading because the motivating image is lost. The specialization cline ranges from the least specialized (the expression is fully isomorphic and fully motivated) to the most specialized (the expression is not motivated and the literal reading cannot be recovered).

According to Niemeier, whereas conceptualization is close to the metonymic basis at the specific level, i.e. when a salient physical part stands for the whole, the domain is implicit at the most general level of conceptualization. Different sub-folk models are involved in the structure of the domain; the referent is usually given a meaning that is culture specific, that is, "the more general the conceptualization, the more indirect is the metonymic connection to the underlying concept" (Niemeier, 2000: 209).

2. Corpus of Colour Expressions in English and Spanish

Our corpus consists of colour single lexical items, idioms and collocations where the colour contributes to the meaning. Idioms from a cognitive perspective are the product of a conceptual system and they are motivated by cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy, for which cultural models play an important role (Kövecses and Szabó, 1996).

A collocation is "a type of word that typically occurs together or in the neighbourhood of" (Taylor, 2002: 191). From our point of view, collocations also form part of the conceptual system and share the same cognitive mechanisms as idioms. In fact, collocations may be regarded as the first step towards the process of idiomatization, although this does not necessarily imply that all collocations will become idioms. Finally, single lexical items also undergo metaphoric and metonymic processes.

The English examples are taken from the *British National Corpus* (BNC) and the Spanish ones from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA). These two corpora are comparable. We selected expressions with *red*, 14 in English and 5 in Spanish, and with *green*, 18 in English and 15 in Spanish. The selection is based on examples appearing at least four times in the corpora, with a non-literal meaning.

3. Corpus Analysis

3.1. Red

In our corpus, we find the metonymic idiom *to be in the red* - in Spanish *estar en números rojos*. In both languages the expression is based on a common habit of business clerks to write or mark debts with red ink.

- (1) Britain's trade balance was **in the red** on manufactures.
- (2) estamos siempre en **números rojos**.

Another metonymic idiom in English is *red and raw* based on the physical result of an action of friction, where *red* stands for *blood* and *raw* for *skin abraded*. There is no Spanish counterpart for this idiom with the colour red. No more abstract or metaphorical uses of this expression were found:

- (3) After a reception for nearly 150 guests, my right cheek was **red and raw**.

Based on socio-cultural activities, both in English and Spanish, we have the metonymic idiom *to roll out the red carpet*, in Spanish *extender la alfombra roja*:

- (4) it is very worrying when Kohl himself **rolls out the red carpet** for a man like Waldheim.
- (5) Cuando vienen aquí, les dan los empleos y les **extienden la alfombra roja**.

In both cultures, the activity of "rolling out a red carpet" takes place when important events occur, to welcome people in a special way, or with a flattering purpose. The metonymic relationship between the activity and the purpose of that activity is lexicalized in these idioms.

In Spanish and in English the collocation *libro rojo / red book* refers to either books that compile information about a topic, as a guide for future actions, a kind of memorial annual, or as a book that compiles names and information about people in an organization (in the latter case only Br. Engl.). In England there is a book that contains the names of all the persons in the service of the State. In the former usage, this comes from an extension of the original function of Mao Zedong's *Red Book*, a compilation of quotations to establish Mao's main ideas to govern China, and used as the Communist Revolution guide. Both books are named after the colour of the covers. Therefore, the origin of this collocation is metonymic, but there has been a broadening of meaning as

the application of the collocation goes beyond the original referents, and it is used in contexts where there is no such metonymic relationship between the covers of the book and its function.²

- (6) Lo mejor del **libro rojo** de Aznar es su título.
- (7) An annual Green Book [...] will accompany the traditional financial **Red Book**.

From physical instruments used in certain activities, we have the idiom of metonymic origin *red tape*. This is an XVIII century idiom that alluded to the red ribbons or “tapes” that tied together official documents in Great Britain, that is, one observable typical feature of this type of papers stands for this kind of documents. Nowadays, it has broadened its meaning to “delays caused by bureaucratic complexity” although it is still used to refer to bureaucratic papers. In this second sense, a relationship is established between the object and the actions carried out with the papers, which is linked to the action-consequence experience. In the case of *red tape*, a connection is established between the actions performed with official documents and their consequences. Hence, the metonymy CHARACTERISTIC OF OBJECT for CONSEQUENCES OF OBJECT MANIPULATION.

The metonymic use of this expression (forms, etc.) is shown in (9), whereas (8) depicts the extensional use (bureaucracy).

- (8) Bureaucracy and **red tape** make him angrier than almost anything else.
- (9) This, says Mr Eggar, will create more **red tape** and more regulations.

Within the metonymic-metaphorical continuum we find *red handed*, based on catching a murderer with blood still on his/her hands, and therefore, metonymic where the RESULT OF PERFORMING AN ACTION stands for THE ACTION. Besides, there is a metonymic relation between the colour and the blood, where RED STANDS FOR THE BLOOD. However, nowadays this is used outside blood crimes to refer to “being caught in the act of doing something illegal”, and therefore, with more metaphorical value. It develops from the entailment, based on culturally specific world knowledge, by which we establish a correlation between having blood on one’s hands and having committed a crime or an illegal action. This entailment allows us to establish an association between the result of a specific illegal action and illegal actions by semantic generalization.

- (10) Police say they’ve caught a terrorist **red handed** on his way to plant a bomb.
- (11) Andy Melville was caught **red handed** on his own goal line.

Metonymic in origin, the metaphorical idiom *to be red hot* has come to refer to something with “frantic activity”, as in (12). It is closer to the metonymic end because speakers find a link between *red hot* used in the original sense and its metaphorical application. Originally, it comes from the observed fact that certain materials, such as iron, glow and become red when reaching a heat point. Therefore, a metonymic relationship is established between the action and its observable result - heating – so that

2. Notice that the Spanish example is fairly ironic as Aznar is a staunch supporter of right wing policies.

the metonymy RESULT STANDS FOR THE ACTION leads to a metonymy-based metaphor, GREAT ACTIVITY IS REACHING A HIGH-HEAT POINT; and a further metonymy RESULT STANDS FOR A STATE IN THE ACTION gives rise to the sub-metaphor FRANTIC ACTIVITY IS BEING RED HOT.

(12) My phone has been **red hot** this week with calls from Sainsbury investors.

Moreover, this expression has developed throughout the metaphorical line, changing the domain or domains onto which it is mapped. For example, nowadays it may refer to the domain of “exaggerated support”, as when it refers to a fanatic person (13), “being brilliant, well done” (14); from this domain it has extended to the concept of “being an expert” (15).

(13) I was a **red hot** loyalist at that time. (Fanatic)

(14) Now he is also doing **red hot disco** remixes. (Brilliant)

(15) Guy’s **red hot** at limbo, believe me! (Expert)

In Spanish, the expression *al rojo vivo* - closer to the metonymic end, as in (16) - comes from the metonymy RESULT STANDS FOR A STATE IN THE ACTION, which in turn gives rise to the metaphor TO BE IN AN EXCITED MOMENT IS BEING RED HOT.

(16) Lo ocurrido en el Consejo de Europa pone **al rojo vivo** estas contradicciones.

The collocation *red alert* in Spanish, *alerta roja* refers to a state of emergency, although still close to the metonymic end, it is in the metaphorical cline as it refers to the more abstract concept of “maximal alert” due to the metaphorical meaning of *red* as the colour that represents “maximal intensity”.

(17) Dr Kavanagh [...] is on permanent **red alert** over his brother’s reputation.

(18) [...] se nos ponía en conocimiento [...] que estábamos en **alerta roja**.

The fact of *red* being linked to the concept of “maximal intensity” is probably also based on experiences similar to those that gave rise to the expression *red hot*. This may be the case because colour folk theories assign the maximum shade of intensity to this colour. In any case, the colour domain and the attention domain are linked through the meaning contribution of the second term of the expression, *alert*.

There are some metaphorical phrases such as: *red rag / red rag to a bull* (incitement). We classify these phrases as being closer to the metaphorical end of the continuum as the context of application is absolutely different. The metonymic origin THE OBJECT FOR THE FUNCTION is still quite transparent, mainly for those with knowledge about bullfighting:

(19) This, Nuttall remarks, acted as a **red rag**.

(20) Their uniform ‘acted like a **red rag to a bull**’ on the population.

In the metaphorical idiom *red letter day* (21), the metaphorical focus is on *red letter*, as the nucleus *day* maintains its literal meaning. It means a day of good luck or a day in which something good happens, therefore it refers to the concept of “good luck” or “fortune”. Its cultural metonymic origin comes from the practice of marking the holy days in red in Church calendars. To have a bank holiday in the English world is related to the idea of being lucky, probably because there are not many days off. However, this idiom does not exist in Spanish, even though there is the same practice of marking holidays in red. Nevertheless, there is not a link between having a holiday and having good luck. Thus, it is a strongly culturally marked metaphorical idiom.

(21) NEXT Thursday’s elections will mark a **red letter day** for tens of thousands of Chileans.

In Spanish, but not in English, the idiom *ser el farolillo rojo* means ‘to be the last of a group’. It is experientially metonymic as it develops from the car that used to go at the end of a cycle race carrying a red lantern next to the last cyclist. The link between this car and the position of an element within a group is metaphorical. There is a change of context, but it is still transparent in origin.

(22) El Deba [...] Es el **farolillo rojo** de las cuencas guipuzcoanas.

In English, there are some collocations with *red* with reference to the domain of “sexuality”, such as *red light area/district* that stands for an area of prostitution. It is originally metonymic as it refers to the red light prostitutes, mainly in Amsterdam, lighted at their doors to announce their availability. However, nowadays this collocation has gone beyond its place of origin and refers to the area where prostitutes are available. It is more abstract, with a broadening of meaning, but still closer to the metonymic end of the continuum:

(23) Carol was working in the **red light area** of Bristol as a prostitute.

Red can also be found metaphorically when referred to the concept of “sexually outrageous”. In this case, *red* maps onto the domain of “sexuality”. Here the doubt is whether the adscription of the colour *red* to the domain of sexuality is based on the metonymic relationship developed from the same contexts of *red light area*, or whether it is just done by cultural value judgements attached to this colour, as in the case of the Spanish link between the colour *green* and this domain.

(24) the street boasted **red descriptions** of every aspect of straight sex.

Another specifically English metaphorical idiom is *red herring*, something that takes people’s attention away from the main subject. In this case, it is at the maximum point in the metaphorical scale, as the origin is opaque for most speakers, and it is even difficult to reason about it.

(25) the ‘hero’ label seemed a **red herring**.

Finally, notice the metaphorical set phrase coined by Tennyson, and nowadays used outside literary contexts: *Red in tooth and claw* (in its very primitive and natural state).

- (26) the pecking order they have created will take on a mortal significance, **red in tooth and claw**.

3.2. Green

Green is metonymically associated with Ecology in both languages. Collocations with *green/verde* stand for ecological related matters such as *green party - the green*, in Spanish, *el partido verde - los verdes*.

- (27) Less determined countries [...] acquire an undeserved reputation for being **green**.
 (28) 75 per cent of **Green Party** members opposed abolition.
 (29) **The Greens** remained the third strongest party.
 (30) el **partido verde** llamó la atención sobre lo que considera una «ausencia» del presidente.
 (31) para obligar al SPD a hacer una política progresista son imprescindibles **los verdes**.

Moreover, the OED lists over thirty collocations related to *green*, most of them of a clear metonymic nature, of which *green card*, *green revolution*, *green salad*, *green-stuff*, *green table* are found in the BNC. Some of them are old-fashioned and related to British history and culture, such as *Green Jackets*, a name applied to the King's Royal Rifle Corps and the Rifle Brigade from the dark green colour of their uniforms.

These metonymic collocations are also found in Spanish. *Green card* is translated as *carta verde/tarjeta verde*. For the American residence permit the collocation in Spanish does not use the colour but refers to the goal of the card: *permiso de residencia*. *Green Revolution* can be translated as *revolución verde* or as *revolución agraria*, and *green salad* is *ensalada verde*. *Green stuff*, translated as *verdura*, does not have a metonymic correspondence in Spanish.

- (32) The **Green Card** is issued at the start of the international journey.
 (33) La **carta verde** servía como una cláusula temporal y suplementaria del seguro del automóvil.
 (34) The **Green Revolution** in Latin America has led to a Kulak path of development.
 (35) La **revolución verde** ha logrado un éxito temporáneo en la lucha del hombre contra el hambre.
 (36) She would eat hers with mustard, a **green salad** and French bread.
 (37) El «Paté de la Casa de Sforza» [...] se presentó acompañado de tiernos nabos y espárragos, remolachas y **ensalada verde** con pepinillos.

In the case of *green table* in Spanish we find the collocation *tapete verde*. In both languages there is a correlation between the typical element that covers the place where cards are played, and the action performed. So the COLOUR OF A SPECIFIC PART STANDS FOR THE SPECIFIC WHOLE, and the conceptualization of the whole leads to the action, thus, THE SPECIFIC PLACE FOR THE ACTION.

- (38) Since that day I have never spent much time at the **green table**.
 (39) Salamanca en la guerra, pasante en Cortes, perseguido de Narváez, amigo de Prim, colgado del **tapete verde** [...]

There are several metaphorical expressions with *green* based on cultural dependent values assigned to the colour. For example, the English idiom, *green with envy*, in Spanish, *estar verde de envidia*. Here the colour green is attached to the feeling of envy due to cultural adscription, shared by English and Spanish speakers.

- (40) Disney's current production run is being financed [...] on terms that make other studios **green with envy**.
 (41) Veo que estás **verde de envidia**, Jorge.

Moreover, in Spanish, but not in English, *verde/green* refers metaphorically to the concept "lascivious, indecent".

- (42) ¿Os parece que acercarse es indecente, es picaresco, **es verde**?

This metaphorical use of *verde* for the concept of lasciviousness is also a culturally dependent value attached to the colour green in the Spanish culture, from which other metaphorical collocations such as *chiste verde* or *viejo verde* are derived.

- (43) Me molesta que una chica diga un **chiste verde**.
 (44) [...] José Bono, tildó a Fraga de «**viejo verde**».

In Spanish, but not in English, *green* refers metaphorically to the concept of "criticism". Namely, the idiom *poner verde a alguien*:

- (45) los testimonios de otras alumnas que **pusieron verde** a la pobre señorita O'Shea.

Based on a certain cultural logic, the idioms *to have a green thumb* or *green fingers*, meaning "being good at plants / having a special talent with plants", develop from entailments specific of British culture with no similar expressions in Spanish.

- (46) Mia has a talent for mothering the way some people **have green fingers** for gardening.

There are two metonymies at play, the first one relates the object of manipulation, plants, with the prototypical colour of the objects that belong to this domain. Therefore, we have a first metonymy THE COLOUR OF THE OBJECT OF MANIPULATION FOR THE OBJECT. The second metonymy refers to the body part used for the manipulation of plants, according to the English view, the hand. However, from this outstanding part of the body, the conceptual prototype locus for the manipulation of things, the metonymy PART FOR WHOLE is applied, as can be observed from the use of *thumb* and *finger* in the idioms. These two metonymies provide the lexical basis for the metaphorical concept.

When native speakers are asked for the motivation of this idiom, they relate "having green fingers" to innate abilities with plants, since they consider this ability to be a gift.

The question is then that there may be just a mapping from the domain of plants to the domain of abilities without metaphorical entailments.

However, for the metaphorical process the next entailment is needed: a person with a special ability with plants will manipulate them with his/her fingers as a medium to project his special talent onto the plants. This reasoning seems possible in English but not in Spanish. This entailment is based on folk theories applied to very specific situations, and it is this type of cultural reasoning which establishes the metaphorical relationship between the domain of “plants” and the domain of “abilities” “or talents”. Thus, A SPECIAL ABILITY IS PROJECTED THROUGH PHYSICAL CONTACT would be a sub-metaphor of the more general one ABILITY IS MANIPULATION. However, these idioms are close to the metonymic end where the domains of “plants”, “ability” and “manipulation” may be considered correlated.

The Spanish idiom *verde y con asas*, referring to “obvious ideas or events” is also based on cultural motivation. In this case, the origin is not transparent for most speakers because the literal referent is specific of the Andalusia region, mainly in villages, and it has not been used for a long time.³

(47) A partir de aquí, **verde y con asas**.

In this idiom, certain objects or activities are associated to a certain quality or state, in this case “obvious” to “being ignorant”. Cultural logic or reasoning is at play. For the expression *verde y con asas*, the most salient characteristics of an object are chosen to refer to that object. So the metonymy CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES STAND FOR THE OBJECT underlies this reasoning. It follows the folk entailment that these features are significantly outstanding in order to recognize the object, therefore, something obvious. The metaphorical mapping appears when we establish the relationship between the recognition of an object and the domain of ideas or events by which IDENTIFYING FEATURES OF THAT IDEA OR EVENT ARE THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF AN OBJECT.

Both in English and Spanish *to be green / estar verde* expresses the metonymy GREEN FOR UNRIPE, based on the experiential fact that a fruit is ripe or unripe depending on the time that it stays on the tree, unripe fruit being usually green. Thus, there exists an experientially cultural correlation between the fact of something being ripe or unripe, with the passing of time. This correlation provides the necessary entailment to link the domain of fruits with the domain of human development. Therefore, the passing of time in the domain of human development is linked to the acquisition of experience, giving rise to an underlying metaphorical structure such as MORE EXPERIENCE IS MORE TIME / LESS EXPERIENCE IS LESS TIME.⁴ The relationships between the domain of fruits and the domain of people give rise both in English and in Spanish to the same metaphor: LACK OF EXPERIENCE IS GREEN.

3. El dicho completo es «verde y con asas, alcarraza». The alcarraza is a type of drinking jug with spout frequently green and very typical of Southern Spain.

4. This metaphor is also present in sayings such as *más sabe el diablo por viejo que por diablo* (The devil knows more for being old than for being the devil).

- (48) I flew as co-pilot, we had a veteran pilot who would be Aeroplane Commander, the rest of the crew **was green** or also on their first mission.
- (49) Figo no llega desde la banda con las fuerzas necesarias, Moreno **está verde** y Bakero no puede ya librar una batalla partido sí y otro también.

In English, the metaphorical idiom *green as grass* also refers to “lack of experience”. Here, the metaphorical reading is reinforced by the metaphorical meaning of *green* as in the previous case. The simile structure just reinforces the concept denoted by the colour.

- (50) [...] **as green as grass**, [...] like a bunch of lost chickens outside the coop.

In both languages the metonymy GREEN FOR UNRIPE is also at the base of other metaphorical uses of *green*. In this case, the metaphorical mappings occur between two physical or concrete domains, what Collins and Gentner (1987) called ‘analogies’. However, when the concept of unripe is mapped onto the domain of things, it develops different metaphorical meanings in each language.

In English we find the use of *green* to refer to not processed food:

- (51) 2 x 15ml/tbsp olive oil 1 large onion, finely sliced 225g/8oz **green bacon**, diced 25g/1oz whole-wheat flour bay leaf [...]

However, when applied to things, *verde* in Spanish also refers to things that are not totally processed, set or fixed, and need re-examination, as in (52):

- (52) CUARENTA días después de las elecciones [...] el pacto **está verde**.

Thus, the metaphor UNPROCESSED THINGS ARE GREEN is valid in both languages. In the case of English, the sub-metaphor applied is NON PROCESSED FOOD IS GREEN, whereas, in Spanish, NOT FINISHED PROCESSES ARE GREEN.

Furthermore, in English, collocations with *green* are closer to the metonymic end because the domains of application are too close conceptually, food and fruits, whereas in the case of Spanish, the metaphor is more abstract, as the domains are very different - food vs. non-food things - therefore it is a more developed metaphor within the metonymy-metaphor continuum.

In Spanish, the idiom *a buenas horas mangas verdes* means that something is done too late.

- (53) Salamanca es capital cultural de estos y otros reinos, desde hace casi 800 años. Así que, **a buenas horas mangas verdes**.

This idiom originated as a metonymy from a fact that belongs to the Spanish anecdotal history. In the seventeenth century the members of the Spanish Inquisition dressed in green, acted as members of the armed forces, and always arrived late when needed because they had to get to far-away places. The whole idiom probably comes

from the much repeated exclamation at the late arrival of these forces. The first metonymy derives from the sleeves of the uniform of these soldiers, therefore, a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. However, to this general metonymy, the fact that the attention is also concentrated on the colour of that part is added, so THE PART AND THE COLOUR OF THE PART FOR THE PERSON.

Also in English we have the collocation *green shoots* which coexists in its literal and metaphorical usage:

- (54) a bush with round purplish leaves and pale **green shoots**.
- (55) the Law Society has had to face the question of how to achieve its strategic aims [...] in the absence [...] of the promised **green shoots** of economic recovery.

It is related to the concept of “rebirth”. In this case, it has a clear metonymic origin. This collocation belongs primarily to the domain of plants, and the use of *green* is related to the metonymy GREEN FOR UNRIPE which reinforces the core meaning of *shoots*, as it refers to the first stages of growth. This collocation is related to the concept of blooming of plants, and the observation of that blooming with the appearance of tiny plants in the branches, thus the underlying metonymy GREEN SHOOTS FOR BLOOMING. But when this metonymy is mapped onto “events”, the relationship between the domain of plants and the domain of non-living things provides the metonymy-based metaphor FIRST SIGNS ARE GREEN SHOOTS.

Moreover, there is an idiom highly productive in both languages: to give, receive somebody the *green light / luz verde*, still quite close to the metonymic origin, although towards the metaphor, at least to a certain extent, because of change of context:

- (56) General Thurman still had to receive a final **green light** from the president.
- (57) [...] el Consejo Superior de Tráfico que ayer dio **luz verde** al Plan Nacional de Seguridad Vial para el 2001.

The metonymy in relation to green is based on cultural principles assigned to the colour green. By social agreement the colour *green* is related to the concept of permission, thus the cultural metonymy GREEN FOR PERMISSION/ALLOWANCE. As this cultural value of green is most frequently coded by means of light, a green light has become the most common image of giving permission. When there is no physical light, this idiom is still metonymic, but there is a certain degree of broadening of abstract meaning as in the previous examples.

Another collocation is *green channel* (free of charge), which has a clear metonymic origin as THE COLOUR THAT DISTINGUISHES THE PLACE STANDS FOR THE PLACE:

- (58) If you stared at a customs officer when going out through the **green channel**, the customs officer stopped you.

However, in example (59) the use of *green channel* outside the context of the customs site in the airport suggests a certain degree of higher abstraction due to the

generalization of the meaning, so it can be said not to be exactly at the metonymic end but in the continuum between metonymy and metaphor.

(59) It failed to gain permission for “**green channel**” facilities for the re-exports.

The expression *green field* can be used metonymically as in (60) or metaphorically as in (61) indicating that something is “unspoilt and open to new experiences”.

(60) Cramlington is ‘non-urban’ (...) located on a ‘**green field**’ site quite separate from the Tyneside conurbation.

(61) The organisation is regarded as a ‘**green field**’, able and willing both to accept and adapt to a completely changed information systems environment.

Nowadays, a green field does not necessarily have to be neither green, nor even a field, it can be just a place where nothing is built on. But originally, places where nothing was built on where literally green fields. Thus, the use of the descriptive expression with a generalization of meaning implies a metonymy of the type DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE FOR THE AVAILABILITY OF THE PLACE, whereby the fact of being a green implies being available for construction. In this case the domains of availability and allowance are getting closer.

In the case of (61), we see a broadening of meaning by generalization which is, in turn, achieved by a change of context. Nevertheless, this expression in this type of context is still close to the metonymic end of the continuum.

Moreover, *Green belt* can be used metonymically (62) or more metaphorically as in (63) although still close to the metonymic end.

(62) 2,000 hospitals and clinics, some in **Green Belt areas** are surplus to requirements.

(63) The London Planning Advisory Committee [...] recommends the upgrading of all metropolitan open space to **Green Belt status**.

The frequent collocation *green book* comes from the British rule over India.⁵ Originally an official publication of the Indian Government with a green cover, nowadays, *green book* refers to a set of regulations, not necessarily legal or Parliamentary. Thus, it is used outside its original political and legal environment. Although metonymic in origin, it is located in the continuum between metonymy and metaphor, being more metaphoric in (65).⁶

(64) The Manual [...] a single document which complements the Company’s **Green Book** of financial procedures.

5. Also, it may refer metonymically to Gadaffi’s Green book that also has a green cover.

6. In the European Community: Green Paper. Commission Green Papers are documents intended to stimulate debate and launch a process of consultation at European level on a particular Topic. These consultations may then lead to the publication of a White Paper, i.e. practical proposals for Community action.

4. Conclusion

Conclusions to this paper have to be tentative. The study of metaphors and metonymies in everyday language lexicalized expressions depends primarily on the interpreter. The problem of the distinction between concepts that belong to the same or to different domains depends to a great extent on the divisions made by the person who carries out the analysis and his/her perspective on the nature of the correlations and the type of entailments that are needed to find a motivation for non-literal meanings.

In addition, it is possible to see a cline in the continuum between literal and metaphorical meanings, but not always within the same expression. There are examples where only metonymic readings are found, and others where metonymic and metaphorical mappings can be suggested. There are also examples of literal and not so literal meanings where a basic metonymy may be proposed for part of the expression rather than for the meaning of the whole, which seems to be on its way to a metaphorization process. This is mainly due to a change of the situational contexts to which the expression is put to serve.

Finally, the continuum, although it has literal and metaphorical ends, shows a central part made up of chains of entailments, not necessarily metaphorical, but based predominantly on cultural or folk knowledge, as well as on value judgements assigned to colours by the members of the linguistic community.

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